





In their own words....

These questions were posed by the public at a Wellington-Halton Hills all-candidates meeting last Wednesday, hosted by the Canadian Federation of University Women, Georgetown.

Editor's Note:

The questions and candidates' responses have been edited. The Libertarian Party and Freedom Party candidates did not attend the debate, and did not respond to requests for answers to these questions.

| | 1: How many jobs could your party reasonably create over the next eight years? | 2: Bureaucratic delays with the Local Food Fund are causing problems for farmers waiting for answers to program applications. What would you do to speed up the process? | 3: Are you willing to vote against your Party's platform on issues that negatively affect Halton Region? | 4: What is your approach to the public service in light of a recent Auditor General's report which found a culture of high entitlement and inflated salaries at OPG - Ontario Power and Generating - a PC legacy? | 5: If elected, how would you support post-secondary education for students? | 6: What is your Party's position on increasing the minimum wage to \$14 per hour? | 7: Will you support a fair and impartial review of provincial policy in regards to aggregates to stop preferential treatment of the aggregate industry? | 8: What will your Party do to improve access to affordable housing? | 9: What would your Party do, if elected, to improve pension prospects for Ontarians? |
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| <p>TED ARNOTT PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE</p>  <p>Arnott, 50, born and raised in Arthur, was elected to the Ontario Legislature 23 years ago, and has represented the Wellington-Halton Hills riding for the past seven and is touted as experienced, dedicated and trusted. He is assistant speaker in the Assembly and serves as critic to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.</p> | <p>"I think it is fairly well-known that the Progressive Conservative Party has set as a goal, the creation of one-million new jobs over the next eight years...Between 1995 and 2003 when our Party was last in government, we did encourage the creation of one-million new jobs - it can be done... Through a co-ordinated policy of lower taxes, less red tape, getting control of hydro rates, apprenticeship and labour law reform, and of course, freer trade with the province, we could make Ontario, once again, a magnet for job creation."</p> | <p>"If there is an application process the government should be dealing with the applications as expeditiously as possible. If needed be the process could be simplified or should be simplified or it there is a backlog, staff should be re-allocated to clear the backlog and people should work hard to get it done..."</p> | <p>"I agree that there should be more free votes in the Legislature and Parliament to allow elected representatives to be seen to be representing their constituents. I believe that our platform represents the best plan for Ontario for the coming years and the best plan for Halton residents, however, my constituents always have come first and I will always fight for the vital interests of the people of Wellington-Halton Hills... Yes, I would vote against my own Party, and I've done it in the past."</p> | <p>"Over the last 11 years since the Liberals have been in power, we have seen hydro rates triple, part of upper pressure on costs is the salary structure at OPG and Hydro One... It is also true the Green Energy Act put dramatic upward pressure on our hydro bills...And yet, salaries, the sunshine list at the OPG continues to grow, but in terms of coming to grips with that problem, it starts with the appointments the government makes to the OPG Board and the policies that Board creates in terms of compensation packages for the staff..."</p> | <p>"Through the years I've served in the Ontario Legislature I've had the privilege of working with the University of Guelph. And as the Member of Waterloo-Wellington, I had a lot of involvement with the University of Waterloo and Loyola school, and Conestoga College... We'd all like to see a university system that ensures that everyone who has the marks to get in has the opportunity to get in and the ability to pay is not an inhibiting factor in preventing a student to get in..."</p> | <p>"No, I'm not in favour of a \$14 minimum wage at this point... I believe it would cost a significant number of jobs in our communities all across the province. If minimum wage goes up that high that traumatically, businesses will find other ways to get the work done ... they'll just put off hiring decisions they might have otherwise taken and I'm afraid some people might lose their jobs...our Party has agreed to the concept of reviewing it on an annual basis and increasing it based on the cost-of-living index."</p> | <p>"The Aggregate Resources Act review, was in fact an impartial review... On the issue of pit and quarry approvals, we must find an appropriate balance between our need for aggregate and the need for a fair hearing of local residents' concerns. The environmental impact of any quarry proposal must be of foremost consideration and the approvals process must be transparent and the appeals process (must be) fair and impartial."</p> | <p>"The federal government is expected to provide the provincial government with about \$458-million this year for social housing... there's a federal commitment, the province usually matches it and local communities - the Region of Halton in many cases - has accessed those programs to build affordable housing. Our Party, certainly through the years, has had a strong record in terms of building affordable housing, certainly with seniors housing in the 1960's, 70's and 80's when we were in power."</p> | <p>"We need to take a careful look at (the Liberal pension plan). Our Party estimates the proposal could kill as many as 150,000 jobs because it increases payroll costs for employers, making it less likely for them to hire more employees. It also increase payroll deductions for employees, meaning it cuts to your take home pay when most of us are living paycheque to paycheque. After all that's happened with this Liberal government - the mismanagement and scandals - do I trust the Liberals to look after my retirement savings?"</p> |
| <p>MICHAEL CARLUCCI NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY</p>  <p>Carlucci, 23, is a law student at the University of Calgary, who said he's lived, worked, volunteered and studied in the riding for the past 12 years. He would cut the small business tax rate and reward job creators, remove the HST from home hydro bills, and improvement youth services.</p> | <p>"The most important thing is not just to create jobs, but it's to stop Ontario from losing manufacturing jobs - we've lost over 35 per cent of our manufacturing jobs - and that's why one of the first proposals of a New Democratic government would be to try to stop this job loss, first, by looking to Manitoba... investing \$250-million to allow companies to upgrade and update their equipment and machinery as an incentive to stay in our province. That's also why the New Democrats are also looking to reward job creators, both in manufacturing and non-manufacturing, with strings attached..."</p> | <p>"My role as your representative is to ensure that your issues are dealt with, and while the NDP doesn't have a specific policy proposal in our platform to deal with expediting this process, as your representative, that would be my role and responsibility and I would take it very seriously."</p> | <p>"This is one of the reasons I happen to be running for the NDP. I believe the NDP is a Party that is friendly to different voices, and that as your representative I could have the Leader's ear in ensuring a proposal wasn't against our riding, but at the same time, should it occur that there was a vote on an DNP policy against the riding... by principle, I could not stand aside. As your representative, it's my responsibility to represent you, first, to my leader and not just representing my leader back to you."</p> | <p>"The NDP had first, a proposal to cut public sector CEO to try to tackle some of the culture of entitlement, and ensure that the money we need to fund programs is going where it needs to be... you mentioned those proposed 100,000 cuts to the public sector - it appears Hudak's plan for dealing with this - that some in the public sector is may be overpaid - is to cut the public employees numbers - that's not necessary for balancing the budget. Compared to the other provinces... Ontario has a very low number of public sector employees according to population."</p> | <p>"In order to invest in a strong economy we need to invest in youth, and that means making sure we can get educated and part of our proposal is to freeze tuitions. Another one is to eliminate the interest on the provincial portion of student loans for post-secondary students. And finally, to invest in our colleges and universities by committing to urgent campus facility maintenance needs..."</p> | <p>"The Liberals proposed to increase the minimum wage to \$11 per hour, and the NDP did not want to support it because we believe increasing the minimum wage to \$12 an hour not \$14. It's not just about low income people, that can help, but it's also for youth voters...student debt levels are 280 per cent higher than they were in 1980, which means those students have to work a heck of a lot harder to pay off those loans."</p> | <p>"The NDP figures increasing community participation including consultations but also providing local communities with more say in the approvals process... Unfortunately, the governments we seen over the past years have induced budget cuts that have essentially gutted the types of protections and authorities that would deal with local community concerns of protection. ...the approach under Hudak is to further undermine these authorities... we are in favour of increasing community say."</p> | <p>"Affordable housing is being made available, but it's not always being made available for those who need it most - the very low, lowest of the income groups. And that's why the NDP proposes to increase affordable housing for those who need it...this means investing in new affordable housing and repairing existing, substandard housing. The New Democrats are proposing an Ontario living plan that includes landlord licensing, inclusionary zoning and increased tenants' rights..."</p> | <p>"I'm sure many of you have noticed the fact that the issue of pensions is not mentioned specially in the NDP platform in this round of elections, and the reason for that is because we do not support what the Liberals propose, which would be an Ontario-made pension plan, however to impose it, it wouldn't come into effect until 40 years down the road, so it's not a realistic proposal for current pensions."</p> |
| <p>DAN RODGERS GREEN PARTY</p>  <p>Rodgers, 61, a resident of Aberfoyle, is making his first run for office as a last minute candidate. He is a self-employed environmental scientist, community volunteer, former soccer and basketball coach. He said the Green Party's approach and perspective on jobs, kids and environment offers a range of financial and responsible approaches to education, transportation and energy.</p> | <p>"The Green Party - much of our focus is local and small business - and one of the proposals in our job platform is to double the amount of income, of revenue, that a small business can obtain from \$450,000 to \$900,000 before they lose their health tax exemption. This basically allows small businesses to keep, to grow at a critical time in their growth period."</p> | <p>"If it is a procedural problem, it would be nice to examine the government process and smooth it out. I think this might be more difficult if the Conservatives win a majority and we lose 100,000 jobs."</p> | <p>"Yes. (Green Leader) Elizabeth May when she was here made the comment, that at least at the Federal level, you take very and intelligent and capable people and put them into Parliament, and they essentially become trained seals following their Party's orders. The Green Party is very keen to maintain the individual MPP or MLA's right to canvass his riding and determine if, in fact, it is consistent with the riding's Party principle. Personally, I would vote against it if the Green Party were in power but it was against the interest of this riding."</p> | <p>After completing my PhD studies... I worked more than 25 years with Ontario Hydro research division and its successive companies as it was privatized...With respect for salaries, they are nowhere near what corporate leaders are getting. Most of the people I work with are highly competent and it's an engineering scale and it's a competitive field. I don't think they are that far out of line."</p> | <p>"The education system requires some re-invention. There are a lot of things happening with business communications with electronics all of that, and a lot - I don't really think that 300 students crammed into a lecture in Calculus with a professor they can't understand is the best way to do it...they're wonderful universities...but we really have to look and change with the times, there is a lot that can be done."</p> | <p>"The attention over the amount of raising the minimum wage really misses the real issue which is poverty. The Green Party is proposing a guaranteed annual income to help alleviate that for those worst off in our society. The Green Party is also proposing doubling the child benefit for children who are at or near the poverty line, which I think is right now is one-in-seven children in Ontario."</p> | <p>"...As far as aggregate, I think there's another side that should be looked at - and that's the revenue side and the levies (producers pay the province.) The (aggregate) demand in Ontario is now 180-million tonnes. Quebec applies a levy of 50-cents on each tonne. That would give rise to about \$90-million of revenue and perhaps some of that should go to the municipalities to maintain the roads that are being damaged by the aggregate trucks..."</p> | <p>"A guaranteed annual income would be one of the ways of helping (poverty and housing).With respect to affordable housing, the Green Party has a policy that new development should include a real, significant portion of low-income housing in the mix, they are in favour of that sort of thing."</p> | <p>"Right now, we have the Canada Pension Plan and we should be looking at fixing it rather than setting up a completely different or an additional plan. If a guaranteed annual income does come about it would apply to seniors as well as anyone else."</p> |
| <p>DAN ZISTER LIBERAL</p>  <p>Zister, 42, lives in Toronto, and is making his first run for public office. He was born on a Woolwich Township horse farm, and after a working at National Defence, and then in world banking, returned to Canada four years ago. The business consultant said he has the real world skills to make a compassionate difference at Queen's Park.</p> | <p>"I do appreciate the math of creating jobs is a bit tricky and I don't - you've probably heard about Mr. Hudak's plan - it's easy manipulated to sound good. Now, what I can tell you about is the number of jobs we have created in the last year - we've created 100,000 jobs in the last year and 26,000 of them last month. A Liberal government is well on track to continuing the economic recovery we've been experiencing since the 2008 crisis."</p> | <p>"If it's a matter of the process - anytime provincial government services are subject to bureaucratic problems and this sounds like it's one of them - it's not necessarily a Party problem, but obviously, as the government we want to look into this and do what we can to speed up the process..."</p> | <p>"...I'm possibly going to have a hard time voting against something that would go against my riding or go against my beliefs just to satisfy the over-all views of my Party. I've worked in numerous companies in various roles and situations, and I haven't been afraid to stand up against things that, management, when it comes to things I believe in.... I'm not likely to be standing up or voting along the lines of Party when it comes to something that goes against something I believe in."</p> | <p>"I'm not all that up to speed on OPG and everything associated with that, obviously it's been quite and with the Party and we've done a lot to improve our energy infrastructure, and done some great things in terms of shutting down dirty coal plants and natural gas plants...With caps on CEOs, to think we can put all these regulations on the public sector without somehow addressing the private sector is unrealistic."</p> | <p>"The government has done a lot in terms, since 2003, of promoting post-secondary education - I think they put in this riding \$1.8-billion in investments for the post secondary area. We put in the 30 per cent off tuition for post-secondary education and would continue that going forward."</p> | <p>"We recently made some definite movements in increasing the minimum wage, bringing it up to \$12, I believe, an hour and we had it built in for indexing for inflation which we would be re-introducing if we were the government again. How we get to \$14 that's a bit beyond, I can't speak to that at this point."</p> | <p>"Yes, I would certainly be in support of a review of the Aggregate Resources Act and ... will be increasing annual funding there was an appeal that went to the OMB for a quarry (refused) in West Montrose - the process can work, it is painful, I do appreciate, but anything we can do to make it more fair is certainly something I be in favour of."</p> | <p>"The short answer is yes, our Party is committed to increasing affordable housing and ... will be increasing annual funding for the Community Prevention initiative by \$42-million, our first year bringing the total for a total of \$240-million, and also re-committing to the investment in affordable housing program for a five-year \$400-million investment, so we are certainly committed to affordable housing and continuing the work we've been doing with that."</p> | <p>"(Our) plan is something we've had to do because the federal government wasn't standing up to the plate and enhancing the CPP (Canada Pension Plan) which is a disappointment because that's what we should be addressing.... We've certainly done a lot in the community to help seniors age at home for instance, and other things I could refer to you after this discussion..."</p> |